has already been identified for provision of ATM facility. the site preparation is complete and the order for ATM has already been,placed with the vendor. The deliveries are expected within 2 months. The ATM would be operationalised by SBI on delivery of the ATM by the vendor.

Representation for raising exemption limit of income tax

4309. SHRI BANGARU LAXMAN: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a number of Members of Parliament have represented for raising the exemption limit of income tax in view of the high rise in prices in the country; and

(b) if so, the action taken or proposed to be taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The decision of the Government is reflected in the Finance Bill, 1997.

Proposal for forward trading of Gold and Silver

4310. SHRI BANGARU LAXMAN: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Bullion Merchants' Associations has urged Government to allow forward trading of Gold and Silver in the country to curb price fluctuations and smuggling;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the bullion exchange system throughout the country was closed down in 1963 under the policy of Gold Control Order; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and the action proposed to be taken by Government to stabilise the prices of gold and silver in the country *vis-a-vis* the international market to curb smuggling?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR): (a) to (c) the information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Modernisation of Calcutta Mint

4311. SHRIMATI CHANDRA KALA PANDEY:
SHRI NILOTPAL BASU:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether M/s. Micon, which was consultant for modernising the Calcutta Mint, suggested that three blanking lines and two buck furnances be installed in the Mint;

(b) if so, whether this has been implemented; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR): (a) to (c) The recommendation of M/s. MECON, who were project consultants for the Mint's modernisation project, have been implemented to the extent approved by the Government.

Autonomy to State Co-operative Banks in giving credits

4312. DR. D. VENKATESHWAR: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether NABARD plans to give the State Co-operative Banks autonomy in giving credits;

(b) if so, details thereof; and

(c) the advantage likely to be accrued by giving more autonomy to 360 district level Central Co-operative Banks?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR): (a) to (b) As reported by National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Develomment